



CHARLENE SHARPE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

OPA board OKs budget, other plans

GM Viola says association's financial circumstances hit highest point in 20 years

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 22, 2024) The Ocean Pines Association Board of Directors approved a \$15.3 million operating budget for FY 24-25 on Saturday, as they also raised fees in certain areas and established spending plans on roads, draining and bulkheads.

The association's financial circumstances are the best they have been in years, with General Manager John Viola reporting that the balance sheet is the strongest in 20 years.

He also told the board that the community is well situated for the Displaced Moving Average (DMA) study in November. This evaluation is when an outside contractor comes in and reviews all of Ocean Pine's as- See ASSOCIATION'S Page 9

CLIMBING TEMPERATURE

The weather might not have been as conducive to outdoor activities this past week as it was earlier in the month, but that did not deter kids at the White Horse Park playground in Ocean Pines on Monday, when they manufactured their own warmth by climbing on the equipment.

Wawa clears hurdle, but more to be done

Preliminary approval given while commission awaits architectural improvements

By Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 22, 2024) Plans for a Wawa in Berlin got preliminary approval this week but developers will have to work elements of the town's architecture into the design if they want the project to come to fruition.

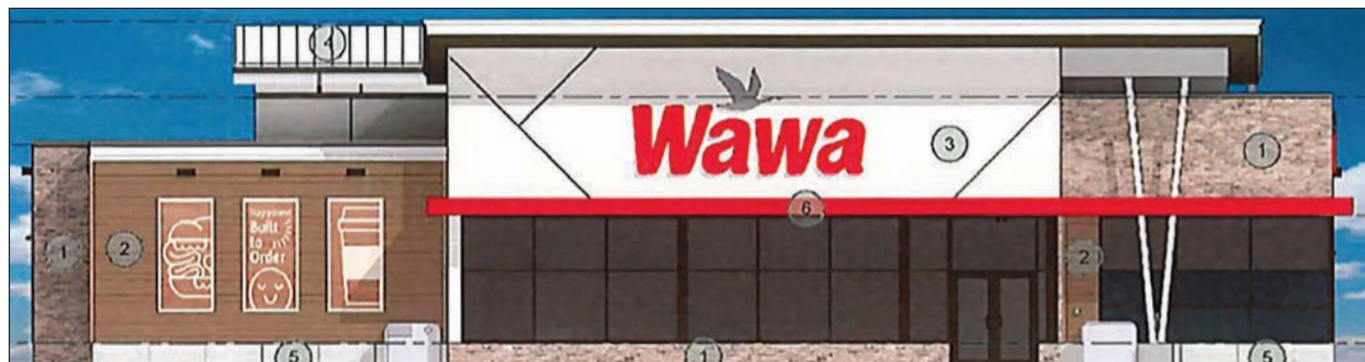
After nearly three hours of discussion and several failed motions, the Berlin Planning Commission voted 4-2 Wednesday to give preliminary approval to the site plan for a Wawa at the intersection of Route 818 and Route 50.

Commission members want the developer to return with revised elevation drawings showing elements that relate to the architecture of Berlin.

"I don't want to lose this project," commission member Pete Cosby said. "Take a bow to us is all I'm saying. Make the box pretty somehow." In 2021, the commission approved

a site plan for Athena Properties, the parcel on the corner of routes 818 and 50, that included a 7-Eleven and a hotel.

See WAWA Page 6



SUBMITTED PHOTO/OC TODAY-DISPATCH

A rendering of the proposed Wawa for N. Main Street near Route 50 in Berlin is pictured.



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FILE PHOTO/OC TODAY-DISPATCH

Elected officials agreed last week to continue with a moment of silence to open government meetings at town hall, pictured above.

Berlin stays with moment of silence over prayer, blessing

Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 22, 2024) More than three years after prayer was removed from town council meetings, officials made it clear they now prefer the current format.

Council members said that while they might have objected when Mayor Zack Tyndall stopped starting meetings with the Lord's Prayer, they now prefer beginning with the moment of silence that's become customary since late 2020.

"I would be in favor of proceeding as we have been," Councilman Dean Burrell said. "Religion and nonreligion is a personal and private thing. Who I pray to and pray with is entirely personal and private. If we could keep that personal and private, I think we would be in a better place because when you start talking about beliefs, which are all individual beliefs, we could get as many beliefs in this room as there are people. I think we're in a good place."

Shortly after being elected in October 2020, Tyndall eliminated the recital of the Lord's Prayer from the start of council meetings. At the time, Tyndall said he wanted to be more inclusive and would instead start meetings with a moment of silence.

Councilman Jay Knerr last week asked during last week's council meeting if his peers wanted to reconsider that concept and perhaps begin the meetings with a blessing. He suggested one option would be having elected officials take turns saying a nondenominational blessing instead of the moment of silence.

"The safest route is the way we do it," said Dave Gaskill, the town's attorney.

Tyndall said he'd removed the

prayer because he felt it opened the town up for liabilities. He added that he continued to say the prayer in his head during the moment of silence.

Councilman Steve Green said he liked the way the Worcester County Commissioners started their meetings, with blessings from pastors from different churches throughout the county. He added that Berlin was a town with 14 churches.

"I think we have to be open that if the 15th one comes and it's one that's maybe a different belief we have to open it to those entities as well," Tyndall said.

Green said part of being a community was recognizing differences everyone had. He added that his church's pastor would be happy to participate.

"How would that be nondenominational?" said Sara Gorfinkel, executive assistant to the mayor.

Tyndall said he wasn't sure but felt it would be better to have guests

See PASTOR Page 5

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FILE PHOTO/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

A motions hearing in the case is scheduled for March 6 with a jury trial slated for April 3-5.

Former Worcester County teacher faces abuse charge

Charlene Sharpe
 Associate Editor

(Feb. 22, 2024) A former Stephen Decatur High School teacher is facing a felony child abuse charge related to a relationship he allegedly had with a student in 1991.

Ronald Lee Davis, 63, of Salisbury, faces a charge of “child abuse: custodian” in Worcester County Circuit Court. The case, which has a motions hearing set for March 6, stems from time Davis spent as a music teacher at Decatur during the 1991-1992 school year.

Davis spent recent years working for Somerset County Public Schools but has been on administrative leave since the investigation began last fall, Victoria Miele, public relations supervisor and public information officer for Somerset County Public Schools, said.

“Mr. Ron Davis was placed on administrative leave in mid-October, immediately after SCPS district administration learned of the allegations from the investigating law enforcement agency,” Miele said. “The alleged events occurred before Mr. Davis was hired by Somerset County Public Schools. I’m unable to comment any further due to em-

ployee confidentiality laws.”

According to the statement of charges, law enforcement in Worcester County received a letter from the Archdiocese of Baltimore’s Office of Child and Youth Protection on Oct. 17, after a woman told them she’d been sexually abused as a 17-year-old at Stephen Decatur. When local law enforcement contacted the woman, she said she wanted to proceed with an investigation. She told police she had suffered from “depression and nightmares dues to her sexual relationship with Mr. Davis.”

“Although at the time when she was 16-17 years old and in a ‘consensual’ sexual relationship with Mr. Davis, she knew it was wrong but didn’t know how to make it stop,” the statement of charges reads. “It wasn’t until she was in therapy that she learned it was sexual abuse.”

According to the charging documents, during the victim’s senior year in high school she had three classes with Davis. She told investigators they engaged in sexual activity daily.

“Sexual acts occurred at SDHS to include the band room, Mr. Davis’s office, and back practice room in the

See COURT Page 5

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Court hearing set for March 6

Continued from Page 4

instrument room, which was all within the band area, and the music library room,” charging documents read.

Charging documents said a parent who saw the victim leaning her head on Davis’s shoulder during a band trip expressed concern to Lou Taylor, who was then Decatur’s vice principal and current school system superintendent. In an interview with law enforcement, Taylor told investigators Davis approached him sometime in the spring of 1992.

“He explained he needed to be honest with him; his conscience was bothering him,” charging documents read. “Mr. Davis told Mr. Taylor that he had a relationship with one of his students. He couldn’t live with himself for having the inappropriate relationship. Mr. Taylor assumed inappropriate meant a physical relationship. Mr. Taylor didn’t believe the relationship was a long relation-

ship. It sounded to him like it was a couple months. Mr. Taylor did not ask for a timeframe. Mr. Davis resigned, amicably, and went to Somerset County to teach middle school band.”

Taylor took the information to his principal, who then reported the situation to the superintendent of schools at the time, according to court records.

During an interview with investigators, Davis told them he had a consensual relationship with the victim after the school year ended, during the summer. Charges were filed against Davis in Worcester County Circuit Court Nov. 28. A motions hearing is scheduled for March 6 with a jury trial slated for April 3-5.

The Child Victims Act of 2023, which went into effect Oct. 1, has eliminated the statute of limitations for sexual abuse cases in Maryland. Prior to the legislation, abuse survivors had to file a claim before their 38th birthday for legal recourse.

Pastor participation debated

Continued from Page 3

come in than have councilmembers lead the blessing.

Resident Gabe Purnell said he preferred the moment of silence.

“My opinion is, and I’m a solid Christian, my opinion is in this diverse society that we live in, when you said let’s have a period of silence, to me that’s fine,” he said. “If I’m Christian, if I’m a Buddhist or whatever I am, I can do it in silence. God hears our prayers whether they’re silent or whether they’re verbal. It would be great, now my wife don’t agree with me on this, but that’s my personal opinion. I think it would keep us out of trouble. Now the county’s getting away with it but one day it might come back to bite them.”

His wife, Commissioner Diana Purnell, said that while the commissioners had pastors lead the blessing, it was typically rather general.

“They do not normally pray as we would in church,” she said. “They come in and ask for prayer for the commissioners, they pray we have wisdom and that type of thing. We don’t get into a lot of biblical scriptures. We thus far haven’t had any problems.”

Councilman Jack Orris said if a blessing was added to town meetings, all of the town’s churches should be included. He said he didn’t think any of the elected officials should lead the blessing.

Burrell said he’d been appalled when Tyndall removed the Lord’s Prayer from meetings but now felt it had been the right thing to do.

“I really don’t think we should go back,” he said. “Like Dave said, we open ourselves for a lot of governmental impacts.”

Tyndall said the conversation had been good to have even if the council wasn’t interested in pursuing any changes.

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Town of Berlin Public Notices

OCD-2/22/2t



TOWN OF BERLIN

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP # 2024 – 03
Audit Services for Existing Information Technology Contract and System

Due Date: Friday, March 15, 2024
Time: 3:00 P.M. EST

The Town of Berlin is seeking Proposals for Audit Services for the Town's existing Information Technology Contract and System. Qualified firms are encouraged to visit the Town of Berlin website at berlinmd.gov/government/request-for-proposals/ or contact Town Administrator Mary Bohlen at 410-641-4314 / mbohlen@berlinmd.gov for official RFP.

Sealed proposals will be accepted until 3:00 PM on Friday, March 15, 2024. EEO.

OCD-2/22/2t



TOWN OF BERLIN

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

2024 – 01
Facilities Design and Build Services

Due Date: Friday, March 29, 2024
Time: 3:00 P.M. EST

The Town of Berlin is seeking RFQs for Design and Build Services for three (3) facilities owned and operated by the Town: 1) Partial Renovation of Town Hall; and 2) Complete Build of a new Public Works Facility; and 3) Complete Build of a new Community Center. Qualified firms are encouraged to visit the Town of Berlin website at berlinmd.gov/government/request-for-proposals/ for the official RFQ or contact Town Administrator Mary Bohlen at 410-641-4314 / mbohlen@berlinmd.gov for the official RFQ.

Sealed submissions will be accepted until 3:00 PM on Friday, March 29, 2024. EEO.



TOWN OF BERLIN, MARYLAND

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-01
MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF BERLIN INFRASTRUCTURE BONDS, 2024 SERIES A

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF BERLIN (THE "TOWN") PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS IN AN AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT EXCEEDING \$3,800,000.00 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING ALL OR A PORTION OF THE FUNDS NECESSARY FOR (I) FINANCING, REIMBURSING AND/OR REFINANCING COSTS OF THE PROJECTS GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS (A) ELECTRIC AMI METER SYSTEM AND (B) PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING, (II) FUNDING A PORTION OF A CAPITAL RESERVE FUND AND/OR OTHER RESERVES, AND/OR (III) PAYING OR REIMBURSING ISSUANCE AND OTHER COSTS RELATED TO THE BONDS, SUBJECT TO THE FURTHER PROVISIONS OF SUCH ORDINANCE.

The public hearing on the Ordinance will be held at 7:00 PM on Monday, March 11, 2024. The Ordinance will be introduced at the Mayor and Council's regular meeting on Monday, February 26, 2024 and may be considered for passage at the March 11, 2024 regular meeting. The public hearing and both meetings will be held at Berlin Town Hall, 10 William Street, 2nd Floor, Berlin, MD 21811, beginning at 7:00 PM.

The hearing is open to the public and public testimony is encouraged. Written comments may be submitted by no later than 12:00 PM (noon) on Monday, March 11, 2024 as described at <https://berlinmd.gov/government/council-meetings>.

The Ordinance is available for review at Berlin Town Hall during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM or on the Town website at www.berlinmd.gov.

Persons with questions regarding this matter may call 410-641-2770.

OCD-2/22/2t

Wawa gets through round 1, but needs prettier package

Continued from Page 1

In December 2023, project representatives came to the commission to say they'd be replacing the 7-Eleven with a Wawa.

At the time, the commission tabled consideration of the Wawa site plan because they wanted traffic at the busy intersection reviewed and the design of the building improved.

"Make it something special," Cosby said in December.

Developers returned to the commission this week with updated renderings. Attorney Dirk Widdowson said that while the developer had reviewed the placement of the store's dumpster based on the commission's December comments, its placement had not been changed because if it was moved, passersby on Route 818 would see its doors opening every time it was emptied.

"Those doors open toward the store, not Main Street," he said. "That way when you come on Main Street you'll never see those doors."

He added that the dumpster would be screened by trees and said the appearance of the store would also be softened by the landscaped "Welcome to Berlin" sign the property owner planned.

"It would draw anyone's eye to that," he said. "We're a convenience store and a fuel dispensing location. We can't hide that."

Widdowson said the store Wawa had planned for Berlin was a new prototype that had only been done in Herndon, Va.

"They really feel they are giving Berlin a special building," he said.

Property owner Spiro Buas showed the commission a few alternate east elevations for the building, some featuring a plainer exterior design and others featuring the use of a

variety of different building materials.

While commission members made it clear in December they also wanted a traffic study done, Planning Director Dave Engelhart said the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) deemed it unnecessary because the site had already been approved for a 7-Eleven.

"They're satisfied with everything that's been provided to this point," he said.

Engelhart said he'd received two emails from the public regarding the project. Resident Marie Velong wrote that a stoplight at the intersection was needed and resident Gina Velong said she was worried about traffic increasing in what was already a bottleneck.

Commission member Matt Stoehr said he'd heard similar concerns from other residents.

Buas said he'd asked for a light at the intersection years ago but SHA wouldn't do it because of the proximity to the on and off ramps for Route 113. He said he would like to see a signal there but that it was out of his control.

"It makes my property more valuable to have a signalized intersection," he said.

He stressed that development of the Wawa would include the widening of Route 818. There would be a new right turn lane and the Route 818 access to Wawa would line up with the entrance to the medical complex across the road.

"We've vastly improved what you see there," he said. "There's going to be a huge difference."

Commission member Ron Cascio said SHA didn't know the people of Berlin like commission members did.

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Architectural upgrade sought

the ones with blood on their hands," he said.

Commission member Erich Pfeffer said commission members spoke as representatives for the townspeople. Buas said he had a right to build a commercial facility on a commercially zoned piece of land the town had annexed. Widdowson maintained that the only entity that could bring a signal to the intersection was SHA.

"You will be turning down a plan you already approved," he said, referencing the commission's 5-1 vote to approve the 7-Eleven in 2021.

Commission member Matt Stoehr said the town had changed in the past three years.

"Do you think without development there there's a better chance you're going to get a traffic light?" Buas responded. "If nothing changes nothing's going to change."

Commission member Newt Chandler agreed that more development in the area could push SHA to install a traffic light. Stoehr maintained that motorists from westbound Route 50 turning left and crossing eastbound Route 50 to get to the Wawa would create dangerous traffic conditions.

Attorney Regan Smith said the town had wanted the property annexed, had charged the property owner for water and sewer and had approved the site plan for a 7-Eleven but now that it was a Wawa, officials didn't support it. He stressed that the annexation agreement for the property stipulated that it should be a convenience store, despite the commission's various concerns.

"The town leadership is inconsistent with you," he said.

Cascio said the commission was worried about the health and safety of the town's residents.

Cosby said he wanted the Wawa but felt developers hadn't heeded his request in December for architectural improvements.

"All I asked for was some architectural bones," he said. "I don't see it here."

"It's horrendous," Cascio agreed.

Widdowson said there were plenty of buildings in town that had no architectural quality. He also said the proposed building was built to code.

"We've got to have some guidance," Widdowson said.

Cosby said maybe red brick, awnings or faux windows would help.

Buas said Wawa needed direct guidance, as they typically built to a town's code.

Chandler said he'd be interested in what a Cape May Wawa looked like.

"Those towns have very specific requirements," said Mike Willey of Silicato Development.

Steve Fortunato of Bohler Engineering said the group needed preliminary approval Wednesday for Wawa to continue moving forward. He suggested the commission provide preliminary approval with a follow-up letter addressing specific changes members would like to see to the elevations.

"Most national brands don't have a problem with reasonable modifications," he said. "What's going to be a problem is time...What we want to try to achieve here is a path forward."

Widdowson said Wawa would move on if too much time was spent in a back-and-forth on design.

"They are looking at other property because they are tired of this," he said.

Cascio and Stoehr said they would not support the project because of traffic concerns.

"I don't want to lose this project," Cosby said.

Engelhart pointed out that the commission had worked with other national chains, including Royal Farms, Arby's, Auto Zone and Dollar General in recent years to make their designs fit Berlin.

"We've managed to live with franchise architecture and get it altered," he said.

He added that despite Widdowson's assertions that the project was built to code, the code stipulated that the planning commission would approve all architectural elements of a project.

Pfeffer said he understood the developer couldn't mandate a light but wanted a design that would "speak to the character of downtown Berlin."

Chandler referenced the design Pfeffer presented for The Berlin Commons earlier in the meeting.

"Does that look like Berlin?" Chandler said, holding the rendering up. "I don't think so."

Cosby made a motion to approve the project subject to architectural approval after Wawa submitted new plans based on input received during the meeting. Project representatives

See WAWA Page 9

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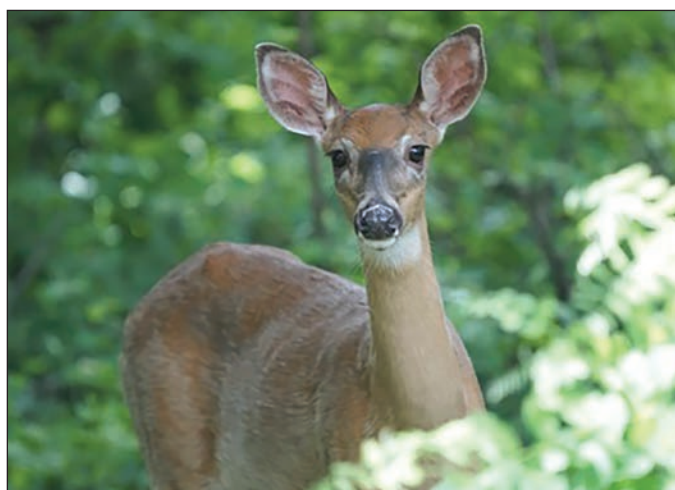
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A female deer is pictured. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources recently reported the deer harvest totals for the season, which were down 5% from last year.

PHOTO COURTESY DEBBIE BLAIR VIA DNR PHOTO CONTEST

Maryland DNR reports drop of 5% in deer harvest totals

(Feb. 22, 2024) The Maryland Department of Natural Resources recently reported that hunters harvested a total 72,642 deer during the combined archery, firearms, and muzzleloader seasons, from Sept. 8 through Feb. 3, which was down 5% from last year's numbers.

According to data from the DNR, Worcester County made up for 2,678 of the total, counting both white-tailed and sika deer. And while the sika numbers were about on par with last season, the white-tailed deer totals were down 4.7 percent for the county.

The statewide harvest consisted of 30,025 antlered and 38,511 antlerless white-tailed deer, and 1,912 antlered and 2,194 antlerless sika deer. The harvest was 5% lower than the 2022-23 total of 76,687 deer.

Hunters harvested 7,074 deer on Sundays, comprising 10% of the total harvest statewide. Hunting deer on Sunday is only permitted during certain weeks in 20 of Maryland's 23 counties, including Worcester County.

The harvest in deer management Region A (Western Maryland) decreased 4%, from 9,552 deer last year

See DEER Page 9

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This activity is supported by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) with funding from the CDC/HHS and does not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, the U.S. Government.

Association's finances superb

Continued from Page 1

sets, funding, and reserves. The purpose is to get a more solid understanding of monetary trends and to foster economic decision-making.

"We are positioned well," Viola said. "We are positioned better than when they first came in five years ago. Everything we said we would do five or six years ago, where we said we would be with that balance sheet, is where we are."

Board treasurer Director Monica Rakowski reported that as of Jan. 31, the OPA had approximately \$14.9 million in cash, which has increased by \$1 million from the previous year. She said the association has invested \$10.4 million in Certificate of Deposit Account Registry Services, which allow better access to Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation coverage in the event of bank failure. The remaining \$4.5 million is in an insured cash sweep, treasury bills, money market, and other operating accounts, distributed between two local banks.

Rakowski said the fiscal 2025 budget was adjusted following the Feb. 7 public presentation to the membership. In addition to the operating budget, the approved spending

plan accounts for \$15.3 million in operating reserves, \$1.6 million in bulkhead expenses, and \$2.7 million for road and drainage replacement.

Assessment interest revenue to reserves will be \$3.4 million, assessment for non-water properties will decrease \$36 to \$850, and \$1,275 is allocated for non-water estate assessments. There is \$1,465 for water assessment, \$2,198 for evaluation of water estates, \$940 for water non-bulkhead review, and \$1,410 for water non-bulkhead estate assessment.

According to the treasurer, the resolution includes a 10% increase in pickleball fees, a 7% increase in boat slip dues, and a 2% increase in seasonal aquatic memberships. There is also a reduction in daily parking rates for the Ocean Pines Beach Club, which Bylaws and Resolutions Committee Board Liaison Steve Jacobs said is expected to result in a \$50,000 drop in revenue.

The budget passed 6-1, with a nay vote from Jacobs.

The meeting can be viewed on the Ocean Pines Association's YouTube channel. The next open session of the board is scheduled for March 23 at 9 a.m.

Wawa proceeds with 4-2 vote

Continued from Page 7

indicated the input had been vague and broad.

"This is so nebulous," Widdowson said.

Cascio agreed. "I concur. It's a horrible system," he said.

Cascio said that while Wawa was in a hurry Berlin was not. Stoehr pointed out that the commission had only been presented with the plans one time, in December, and that designers hadn't even worked in the

comments that had been made then. He said historically, when a developer made an effort to work with the town and returned after making improvements, a project was approved.

After multiple iterations of a motion to approve the project failed, a motion for preliminary site plan approval with the condition that the developer return with revised elevations passed 4-2. Cascio and Stoehr were opposed while commission member Austin Purnell was absent.

Deer harvest down in Maryland

Continued from Page 8

to 9,169 this year. Hunters in the western counties reported 5,678 antlered and 3,491 antlerless deer.

Hunters in Region B — the remainder of the state — harvested 63,473 deer, down 6% from 67,135 deer harvested last year. A total of 26,259 antlered and 37,214 antlerless

deer were reported in the region.

Frederick County had the highest reported harvest this year, with 6,549 deer reported. Carroll County followed with 5,729, and Garrett County was third with 5,108. Baltimore and Washington counties rounded out the top five with 4,550 and 4,418 deer, respectively.



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Ocean Pines board reviews projects, safety initiatives

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 22, 2024) The Ocean Pines Association's Board of Directors held an open meeting on Feb. 17 to address on-going and upcoming initiatives.

Safety is a priority for OPA. Ocean Pines Chief of Police Tim Robinson said the neighborhood's law enforcement has partnered with the Worcester County Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition to evaluate new preventive measures, such as speed surveys throughout the community. Some assessments will be completed remotely, while others will be done on-site with officers.

Crosswalks have also been added to Ocean Pines. The Maryland Department of Transportation helped construct a path between Manklin Creek and Race-track Road for pedestrian and bicyclist access to Food Lion. At the same time, other foot routes were built between Cathell and Ocean Parkway and through the Camelot Walking Trail. Lines and speed bumps were placed by The Manklin Racquet Center. General Manager John Viola said these adjustments were developed after community criticism.

As for racquet sports, Viola said a prototype fence was installed along the line from the Manklin Creek baseball field to the pickleball court to prevent trespassers. After receiving feedback, OPA will evaluate the need for a permanent barrier. The board has estimated the cost to fall between \$17,000 and \$22,000.

Maintenance is at the top of the governing body's list. The general manager said that 35 sections of ditches have been cleaned within the last eight months by outside contractors for \$102,210. "We're seeing many excellent and positive results," he said.

See FUTURE Page 11



PHOTO BY TARA FISCHER/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

Golfers are pictured leaving the Ocean Pines Golf Club earlier this week.

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Sat & Sun, Noon-4pm	Harbor Court, 12801 Memory Lane	3-6BR/3.5-6.5BA	Single Family	From \$849,900	Kathleen M. Clark/Monogram Realty	
Saturday Until 4pm	12346 Old Bridge Rd/Rt. 707, West OC	2BR/1 BA	Single Family	From \$184,271	Larry Holdren/Larry Holdren Real Estate	
Saturday 10am-Noon	38331 Bluebird Lane #368, Selbyville	2BR/2BA	Single Family	\$379,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty	
Saturday 12:30-2:30pm	36939 Creekhaven Drive, Selbyville	4BR/4.5BA	Single Family	\$835,000	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty	
Sunday 11am-1pm	38331 Bluebird Lane #368, Selbyville	2BR/2BA	Single Family	\$379,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty	
Sunday 2-4pm	1 66th Unit 101, Ocean City	2BR/2BA	Condo	\$499,900	Nancy Reither/Coldwell Banker Realty	
Saturday 1-3pm	305 11th Street #301, Ocean City	3BR/2BA	Condo	\$569,900	Team Bouse/ReMax Advantage Realty	
Saturday Noon-2pm	12327 Vista Way, Bishopville	4BR/4.5BA	Single Family	\$1,449,000	Sandy Dougan/BHHS PenFed Realty	
Saturday 2-4pm	8 60th Street #403, Ocean City	3BR/3BA	Condo	\$859,000	Lauren Bunting/Keller Williams Realty of Delmarva	
Saturday 10am-Noon	9807 Marthas Landing Rd., Ocean City	6BR/3.5BA	Single Family	\$1,498,700	Sheri E. Smith/Keller Williams Realty of Delmarva	
Saturday 10am-Noon	12131 Pimlico Lane, Berlin	3BR/2.5BA	Single Family	\$699,900	Power of 2 Team/Hileman Real Estate	





PHOTO COURTESY DAVID J. LANDIS SR.

AGING COMMISSION FEATURED

Pictured, from left, at a recent Kiwanis Club of Greater Ocean Pines-Ocean City meeting are Worcester County Commission On Aging Director of Operations Stephen Douglas, Club President Bob Wolfing and Aging Commission Executive Director John Dorrrough. Douglas and Dorrrough spoke about the commission on aging's programs and efforts to help senior residents.

Future improvements outlined

Continued from Page 10

The expansion of the Yacht Club Tiki Bar, which will add additional service to the pool area, was discussed. The county is reviewing the plans, and OPA hopes to have secured the permit within the next few weeks. Viola informed that Public Works is running a conduit for new electrical service, and Choptank Electric has plans to install a new transformer. Materials for the project have been ordered, and the Board of Directors is confident the development will be finalized by Memorial Day.

The general manager and his team met with Whayland, a contractor based in Laurel, Delaware, on Jan. 30 to discuss design options for the proposed 40-foot pavilion at the Veteran Memorial Park. Once the permit is obtained, OPA intends to begin the work. It is expected to be completed by May 10, 2024.

Along those same lines, the board focuses on community beautification, and Viola is forming a work group to create a standard for the new electronic signage on OPA-owned property. "We're going to list the signs by categories," he said. "See what is regulatory. See what the county and the state say we need to do. We want to be more consistent."

To conclude the meeting, OPA confirmed the appointments of new and re-

turning committee members. Don Bonafede is set to begin his second term in Budget and Finance, John Cacchio will start his first tenure for Marine Activities, Connie Corbett and Cindy Hoffman are joining the Communications group, and Camilla Rogers has been named a member of the Bylaws and Resolutions assembly.

The next public gathering of the Board of Directors is scheduled for March 23 from 9 a.m. to noon.

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Worcester approves new Rural Legacy Area

12,000 acres around Bishopville-Showell now part of county program

By Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 22, 2024) A conservation easement program proposed for the north end of the county could help preserve agricultural land near Bishopville and Showell.

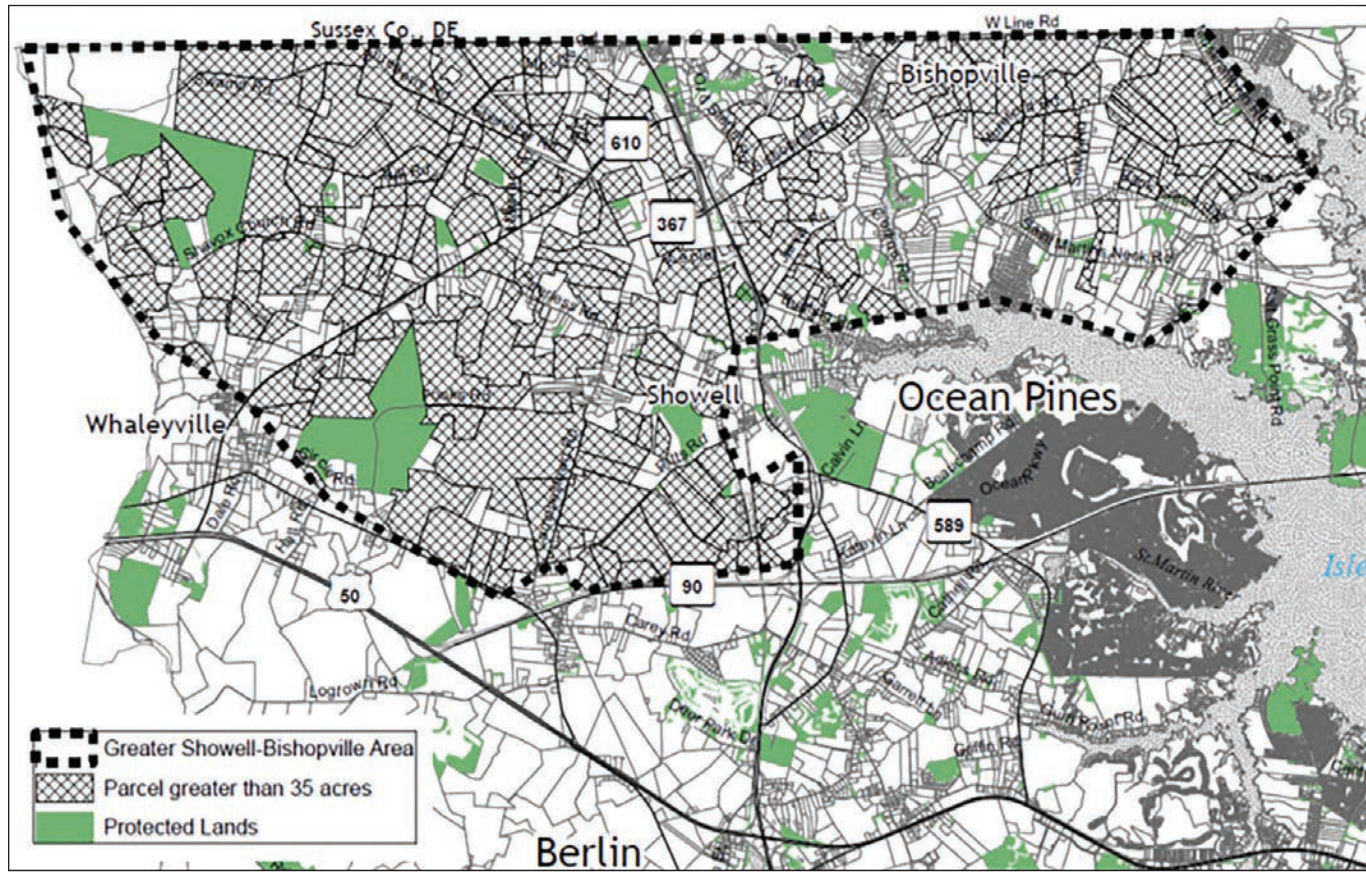
The Worcester County Commissioners Feb. 6 approved plans for a new 12,000-acre Rural Legacy Area for Bishopville-Showell. The state's Rural Legacy program pays landowners for permanent conservation easements on their properties.

"Establishing this area is simply going to give landowners a new option, or choices not available to them before," said Katherine Munson of Worcester County Environmental Programs.

Currently, Worcester County has two legacy areas through the Rural Legacy Area (RLA) program — the Dividing Creek RLA and the Coastal Bays RLA. Funding for the program comes from Program Open Space as well as general obligation bonds from the state's capital budget, according to Bob Mitchell, the county's director of environmental programs. He told the commissioners his department met with area landowners last August to share plans for a potential new Rural Legacy Area (RLA).

"We received overwhelming support from area landowners that they're really interested in this additional conservation easement program for this area of Worcester County, to hold back the Sussex County hordes I guess," he said.

Munson said Worcester County



SUBMITTED IMAGE/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

The new Rural Legacy Area is marked by the dotted line in the image.

currently had about 23,000 acres protected through RLA and MALPF (Maryland Agricultural Land Protection Foundation). About 87,000 acres of the county is cropland.

"Worcester County is the third most productive agricultural economy in the state, with \$249 million in annual value of agricultural products sold," she said. "Our agricultural landscape as you know is what attracts many tourists to our county."

Most of the protected land, however, is in the southern part of the county. The new RLA would put

more focus on farmland protection in the northern part of the county.

"We have spoken with numerous farmers and landowners in this area," she said. "They're interested in land protection, and they're concerned about impacts of adjacent incompatible land uses."

Commissioner Ted Elder said he understood the development pressure in the Bishopville area.

"The north end of the county has been ignored on this for a long time," he said. "We have some of the richest soil up there. I think some of that

needs to be protected."

When he said he'd like to see an even larger RLA there, Munson said it could be expanded over time.

Commissioner Eric Fiori also expressed support for the new RLA.

"I want to thank you for all the work on this," he said. "I think it's really important."

Once the new RLA is approved by the state, the county will be able to competitively apply for funds to purchase conservation easements from willing landowners within the designated area.

State change requires \$6M more in funding

County contribution for health department would increase to \$11 million

By Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 22, 2024) Local officials are asking the state to review a formula that would force the county to increase its funding to the Worcester County Health Department by \$6 million.

The Worcester County Commissioners are supporting Health Officer Becky Jones as she asks Maryland Department of Health officials to review the local contribution required by the Core Funding program. If a change isn't made, Worcester County will have to increase its Core Funding to the health department from \$5 million to \$11 million.

"We would like to be held harmless and have a continuation of what was agreed upon for this year," Jones said.

Jones met with the commissioners earlier this month to update them on her efforts to find out more about the match required for the Core Funding program. She said she was asking for their approval to request that the state review the current match required. She said she was grateful for the Core Funding the health department received but that she was concerned about the required local match, as Worcester County is now expected to increase its match from \$5,015,910 in FY24 to \$11,022,10 in

FY25. She said she'd searched the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) to see how the match amount was determined.

"It's pretty clear in COMAR how they determine funding for Core," she said. "The match, however, we've had difficulty finding in regulation."

She said Worcester County currently provided the second highest match amount in the state, behind only Prince George's County. She said the only reference to the match she'd been able to find was a sentence in a 1996 presentation that indicated the match was tied to a county's mean property value.

"Is property value really the best

representation of our county as a whole or are there other metrics that should be looked at to define and determine what each individual county should be responsible for for their match?" she said. "These are questions we have posed to the state."

She said in absence of a defined match formula, her department was asking the state to hold the county harmless for the proposed increased and to give Worcester a continuation of the agreed upon FY24 match.

The commissioners voted unanimously to support Jones in her efforts to maintain the FY24 match level.

"I think it should be noted you have taken the lead statewide on this much to the consternation of some of your colleagues across the state," Commissioner Chip Bertino said. "It's very much appreciated here at home."

'We would like to be held harmless and have a continuation of what was agreed upon for this year.'

Health Officer Becky Jones

Snapshots



PHOTO COURTESY WORCESTER COUNTY GOLD

WORCESTER GOLD DONATION

Members of the Ocean City-Berlin Opti-MS, Inc. pose with a donation the organization made recently to Worcester County GOLD. Pictured, from left, are Lorena Christian, Sandy Pacella, Jeannie Powell, Mary Gallagher, Connie Podowski, Cindy Ayd, Nancy Jones, and Worcester County GOLD Director Nicholas Cranford.



PHOTO COURTESY OCEAN CITY SURF CLUB

RISE UP FOUNDATION SUPPORT

The Ocean City Surf Club recently donated \$2,000 to the Rise Up Foundation to support local youth. Pictured, from left, are Velda Henry, Rise Up Foundation executive director; Rusty Ruzsin, OC Surf Club vice president; Tommy Vach, OC Surf Club president; and Patrick Henry, Rise Up Foundation executive director.

WINTER AWARDS

Members of the seventh and eighth grade WPS middle school boys basketball team pose with their awards.

Pictured, seated from left, are seventh graders Reed Grinestaff, Zac McGovern and Emerson Bofinger.

Pictured, standing from left, are eighth graders Liam Crowley, Chase Thompson and Ben Rafinski.

SUBMITTED PHOTO/ BAYSIDE GAZETTE



SUBMITTED PHOTOS/BAYSIDE GAZETTE

ART CLUB FUN

Berlin Intermediate School's After School Art Club students recently made mosaics under the guidance of art teacher Joanne Guilfoil. The club is an outreach program of the Art League of Ocean City. Above, Hunter Rodriguez and Jacob Boden pose with their mosaics.



Zoey Brown and Ayla Eade pose with their mosaics.



Nola Gisriel holds up her mosaic.



Mitchell Leisure poses with his mosaic.

Scaled down commercial project applauded

Smaller building applauded for inside Berlin Commons

By Charlene Sharpe
Associate Editor

(Feb. 22, 2024) Town officials reviewed a revised concept plan for a commercial building on Jefferson Street last week.

The Berlin Planning Commission expressed no major objections to a revised concept plan for the Berlin Commons presented at last Wednesday's meeting. Property owners Brett and Megan Hines have reduced the size of the proposed building from three stories to one, though the building will be constructed in a way that will make future expansion feasible.

"I prefer this design to the three-story design," commission member Matt Stoehr said. "It brings more of the commercial element to the area."

Commission member Erich Pfeffer, who is the architect working on the Berlin Commons project, recused himself last week to present the revised concept plan. He said the building was similar to what was presented last summer aside from the fact it had been scaled back in size. He noted that the project would still need approval from the Berlin Board of Zoning Appeals, as it will need reduced setbacks from what is required to be

built as planned.

When asked about the purpose of the building, Pfeffer said it would be comparable to a tasting room. He said it would be a space where patrons could taste The Buzz Meadery's products while getting a glimpse of the brewing process.

"That is the intent, to have it be visible to the public on some level," he said.

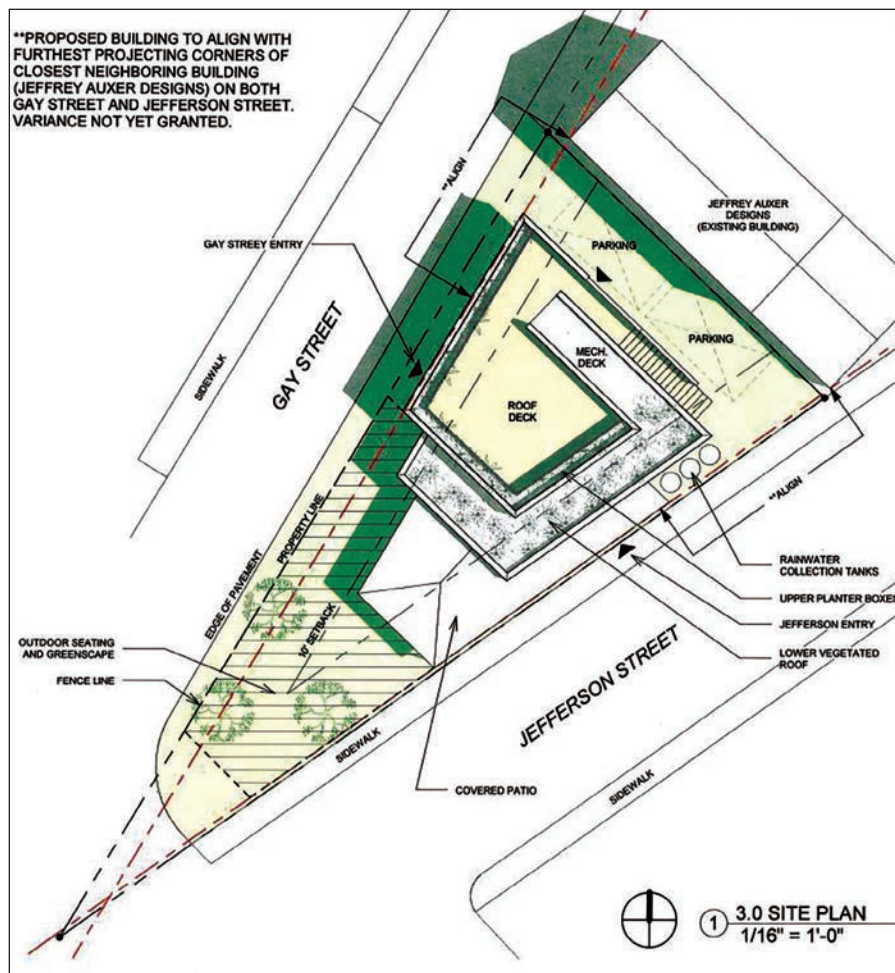
A resident questioned the rainwater tanks shown on the plan. Pfeffer said the tanks would collect rainwater so that it could be used to water the site's plantings and landscaping.

"We're trying our best to eliminate a big impervious footprint on this lot," he said.

As proposed, the building would also feature rooftop gathering space for customers. Commission member Pete Cosby said noise could be a concern but complimented operations at the Berlin Commons so far.

"They seem to have done a good job holding on to the peace and quiet there," he said.

While Wednesday's review yielded no real criticism from the commission, the project will need to return for formal site plan approval and will also need approval from the board of zoning appeals for its proposed reduction in setbacks.



RENDERING COURTESY SEA STUDIO

The proposed site plan for a redevelopment project at the corner of Gay and Jefferson streets in Berlin is pictured.

Area financial firm planning bootcamp for retirement tax

(Feb. 22, 2024) InFocus Financial Advisors, Inc. will host a retirement taxation bootcamp next month in Ocean Pines for individuals who want to learn about managing taxes in retirement, Roth conversation strategies and simplifying Medicare.

A news rerelease said the classes are designed to provide education to people approaching retirement, retirees who want to enhance their financial circumstances, and anyone else interested in maximizing their financial strategies for a comfortable retirement.

Financial Advisor Robert Jeter will host the three sessions, which are set for dates in March at the Ocean Pines Public Library.

The schedule is as follows:
5 p.m., March 7 — Managing Taxes in Retirement
5 p.m., March 15 — Savvy Roth Conversion Strategies
5 p.m., March 21 — Medicare Made Simple

To register, visit retireinfocus.com/taxation-bootcamp-managing-taxes-in-retirement/

For more information and questions, contact Carol Kurtz at 410-677-4848, or carolk@retireinfocus.com

The release said the sessions are designed for educational purposes only and do not constitute financial advice. Attendees are encouraged to consult with a qualified financial advisor for personalized guidance.

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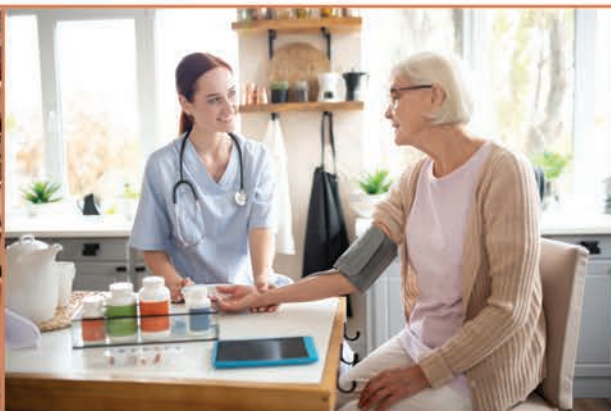

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Opinion

Please send all letters and other editorial submissions to editor@baysidegazette.com by 5 p.m. Monday.

Berlin would benefit from design guidelines

The Berlin Planning Commission’s extended discussion last week on the appearance of the Wawa proposed for the northern side of town showed just how frustrating these deliberations can be for both the developer and the commission.

Clearly, they both could use help in determining issues involving architectural aesthetics, what with commission members unable to define more precisely what they want to see and the developer unable to proceed with confidence without solid guidance.

The best the commission could do for property owner Spiro Buas was grant preliminary approval of his site plan with the provision that he return with a building that did a better job of reflecting Berlin’s architectural flavor.

That’s a broad palette, as attorney Dirk Widdowson asserted during the session, when he noted there were plenty of buildings in town that had no particular architectural style.

The best solution to the problem, however, came after commission member Newt Chandler mentioned his desire to see the design Wawa used in Cape May, New Jersey, a National Historic Landmark. As the developers pointed out, that town and others like it have specific architectural requirements.

Outside Berlin’s historic district, it doesn’t need and possibly can’t impose strict rules governing a building’s appearance, but it certainly can develop guidelines, as the Ocean City Development Corporation has done in Ocean City.

While there’s some question in Ocean City about whether a “guideline” may be safely ignored by a site plan applicant, it remains that developers know it’s easier to go with the program and get their approvals than it is to mount a legal challenge.

With Wawa asking the town what it needs to do to pass the appearance test, and the commission unable to articulate what it wants, it’s evident that design guidelines drawn up in the fashion of the OCDC’s handbook are the best answer for everyone.



CINDY HOFFMAN/OC TODAY-DISPATCH

A WATCHFUL EYE

A heron waits patiently on a tree branch for its next meal.

Summer academies viewed as vital

County school board members hear report on data, importance

By **Tara Fischer**
Staff Writer

(Feb. 22, 2024) Last week, members of the Worcester County Board of Education discussed a plan to secure funding to continue the elementary, middle and high schools’ summer academies during a budget work session.

Coordinator of Instruction Tamara Mills came before the school board to address the finances required for the program. Before COVID, she said, the local government funded the summer sessions for Ocean City Elementary School, Berlin Intermediate School, Stephen Decatur Middle School and Stephen Decatur High School. Grants funded the other schools’ summer academies. The program was able to service over

1,100 students across the county each summer over the last three years, as opposed to the traditional 700 to 900.

Mills explained that the depleted aid package from pandemic programs would force WCPS to request \$377,700 from the county commissioners to support the northern school’s summertime programs. They will also pursue additional avenues of monetary support, such as the Donnie Williams Foundation Grant, from which they requested \$150,000.

Most of the locally requested money, roughly \$264,000, is intended for staffing, fixed charges, materials of instruction, and a small amount for incentives and field trips. At the same time, \$49,500 will be used for bus contractor expenses. Additionally, \$64,200 is planned for employing the schools with a registered nurse.

“We knew already with

losing some COVID funding that we would have to scale back,” Mills said. “Even the grant-funded schools will see a decrease because they only have the one grant, whereas in the past they maybe had two or three grant sources.”

OCES had 12 teachers and four educational assistants across five grade levels for their summer academy last year. Mills said that for the upcoming session, they are only requesting seven educators and hope that it is still a realistic figure to service all the students who benefit from the program.

The summer academy budget issues have also presented challenges for Extended School Year (ESY) services. ESY provides amenities such as academic, physical, and speech therapy and life skills to kids with Individualized Education Programs during the break. There is no cost to parents; it

See PRESENTATION Page 17

BAYSIDE GAZETTE

11934 Ocean Gateway, Suite 6, Ocean City, Md. 21842
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School system reviews state funds

CFO maintains current wealth formula limits money Worcester receives

By Tara Fischer
Staff Writer

(Feb. 22, 2024) The Worcester County Board of Education hosted a budget work session on Feb. 13 at the Newark central office. Chief Financial Officer Vince Tolbert went over the expected funding for the fiscal year 2025.

The estimated numbers are based on Gov. Wes Moore's budget. Tolbert explained that there is roughly an \$800,000 increase in unrestricted money, including \$354,000 for special education, \$62,000 for transportation, and \$180,000 in compensatory aid, an extra amount for each child living in poverty. Additionally, \$107,000 will be used for English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

The county also receives restricted funding for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Poverty grants from the state will increase by \$620,000. Last year, four schools qualified as economically disadvantaged, including Pocomoke Elementary School, Pocomoke Middle School, Pocomoke High School and Cedar Chapel. Snow Hill Middle and Buckingham Elementary were added this year. The grants will be limited to just those schools and part of the money must be used to hire a Community Connection Person.

According to Tolbert, support for College and Career Readiness (CCR) is going down by about \$42,000. Many WCPS officials fear the impact this will have on students.

"The state took away multiple options for CCR, which are very impactful for our students because not all choose to go to college," Chief Operating and Academics Officer Annette

Wallace said. "Many of our students leave Worcester Technical High School to become a welder and are making six figures. That got taken off the table."

Transitional supplemental instruction, which will affect what supplies and materials the county can purchase for reading lessons, is also decreasing by \$49,000. At the same time, the budget for national board-certified teachers will go up by \$2,284. Total restricted state funding is expected to increase by \$689,000.

Additionally, Tolbert presented revenue sources for the school systems. Worcester's percentage of state money is the lowest county in Maryland at 26.3%, while Somerset and Wicomico receive over 80% of their support from the Maryland government. Alternatively, WCPS has the highest local funding source.

The reason for low state financial support in WCPS is the wealth-based aid funding formula based on property assessments and income tax. Because of Ocean City and the money in the north end, Worcester is considered the wealthiest county in the state on a per-pupil basis.

"We have very little chance of getting additional state funding because of that wealth-based formula," Tolbert said.

Maryland casino revenues down overall in January

(Feb. 22, 2024) Maryland's six casinos combined to generate more than \$153.24 million in revenue from slot machines and table games during January, a decrease of more than \$14 million, or 8.4%, compared to a year ago.

According to a news release from Maryland Lottery and Gaming, all of the casinos reported losses last month, with Ocean Downs bringing in nearly 13 percent less revenue than in January 2023.

The release said casino gaming contributions to the state for the month totaled nearly \$63.2 million, a decrease of more than \$7.5 million, or 10.6%; and contributions to the Education Trust Fund were down 11.2%.

The totals were similar to the numbers from January 2022, when gaming revenues were \$153.8 million, and contributions to the state were \$62.5 million, with \$45.5 million going to the Education Trust Fund.

Ocean Downs fared better for the month than two of the casinos in Maryland — Rocky Gap in Allegany County and Horseshoe in Baltimore — while the other three reported lower percentage losses.

Presentation details program

Continued from Page 16

is mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR).

Mills worries that if the northern schools cannot host summer academies, the 142 ESY students would have to be bussed to a grant-funded school, like Snow Hill Middle, increasing the ask for transportation and disrupting the ability to estimate costs.

Board of Education President Todd Ferrante reiterated the importance of adequate transportation. Given the northern schools' proximity to Ocean City, parents are busiest in the summer and may be unable to drive their children to the program. Eliminating support from this area would only hurt the kids that benefit the most.

"Our north end has fewer students living in poverty," Mills said. "But that doesn't mean they don't have any. Even though OCES may not reach the threshold as an entire school to have free meals during the school year, their summer program was at least 50% economically disadvantaged, which allowed them to get those free meals for the summer. Knowing that, transportation is critical. If we do not provide the transportation, it is an equity issue. That says that only the students whose parents have a way to get them to and from are the ones who can take advantage."

The summer academy is vital to many students' success, Mills said. The program includes 90 minutes of literacy and an hour of math daily. Time is also blocked out for art, gym, and music classes.

"Summer academy is designed to

look a little different from regular instruction," Mills said. "With students in fourth grade and up, we compete with summertime to get students there."

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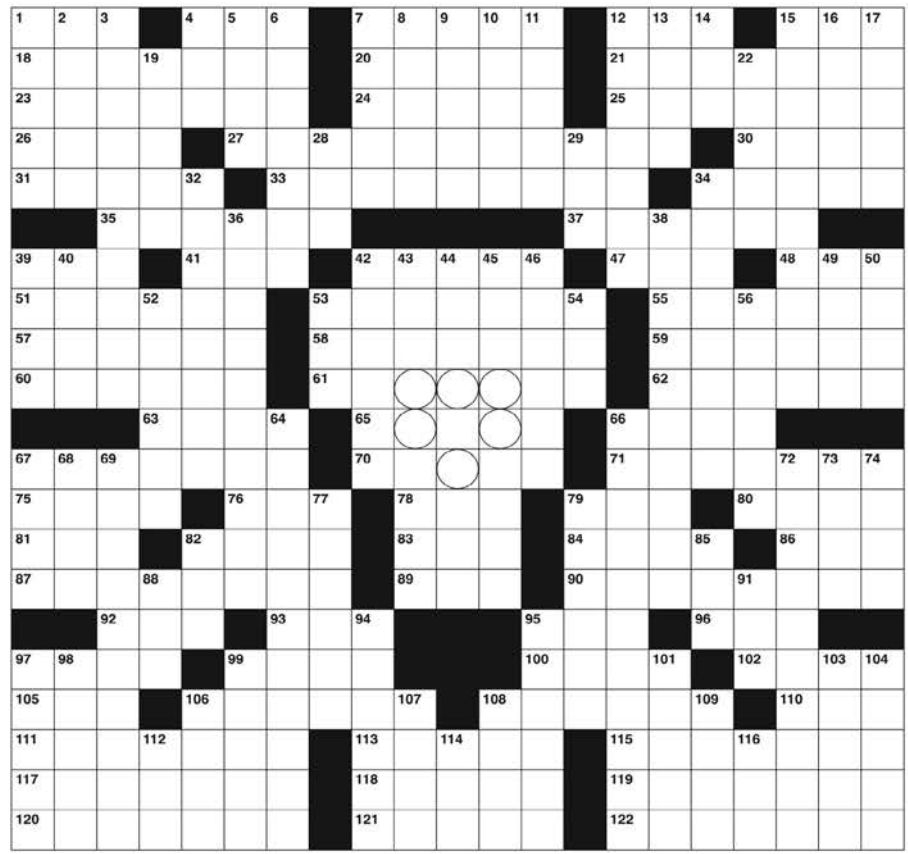
Puzzles

BRIGHT IDEAS

BY PETER KOETTERS / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Peter Koettters is a pediatrician in Pasadena, Calif. This is his fifth crossword for The Times since 2012 and first Sunday. His interest in constructing was piqued by the 2006 documentary "Wordplay," in which he saw Merl Reagle go through the steps of creating a puzzle. He thought, I wonder if I can do that? Peter says his puzzlemaking is intermittent. "My wife hates it when I wall myself off for days working on these things." — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 ___ Pérignon
 - 4 Result of a sand save, in golf
 - 7 Letter-shaped groove used in framing
 - 12 Subway stop: Abbr.
 - 15 Chicago Booth offering, in brief
 - 18 Computer text standard
 - 20 "If all goes well ..."
 - 21 Shook a leg
 - 23 Traditional Indonesian percussion orchestra
 - 24 Baseball manager who once instructed his team to "pair up in threes"
 - 25 It may be a lot outside the city
 - 26 180s
 - 27 *It helps you get the picture*
 - 30 Sportscaster Hershey
 - 31 Annual Pebble Beach event
 - 33 "That is hilarious!"
 - 34 Cite
 - 35 Food-pyramid group
 - 37 Orange-juice specification
 - 39 Place for poisons
 - 41 IV placers
 - 42 Support staff: Abbr.
- DOWN**
- 19 Poet Federico García
 - 10 Talk show host nominated for an Academy Award
 - 11 Whisper from Don Juan
 - 12 Lacking
 - 13 Sashimi choice
 - 14 Verb in some tautologies
 - 15 *The "thing" in "Is this thing on?"*
 - 16 Che Guevara wore one
 - 17 "Easy on Me" singer
 - 19 Activist Chavez
 - 22 Director Walsh of old Hollywood
 - 28 Bygone tape type
 - 29 Seeming eternity
 - 32 Italian dipping sauce
 - 34 Netflix series starring the Fab Five
 - 36 Legacy of 72-Down, seven of which appear among this puzzle's answers and one more suggested by the black squares in the middle of the grid
 - 38 *Something that's big with the current generation?*
 - 39 Actress Sorvino
 - 40 Some nights of celebration
 - 42 Ethically indifferent
 - 43 Tangential remarks
 - 44 When the original Big Five ruled Hollywood
 - 45 Magical objects
 - 46 Union members
 - 49 Those, in Spanish
 - 50 Cereal-box abbr.
 - 52 Designer Miller
 - 53 Relative of Ltd.
 - 54 Hosp. areas
 - 56 Unleashes upon
 - 64 *Bygone tape dispenser*
 - 66 *Failed device meant to communicate with the dead*
 - 67 Swerves at sea
 - 68 Org. that sets worker exposure limits
 - 69 *Object in the classic painting "His Master's Voice"*
 - 72 With [circled letters reading clockwise], American icon born 2/11/1847
 - 73 Common spot for a wasp nest
 - 74 Primatologist Fossey
 - 77 You can trip on it in the desert
 - 79 Didn't stop
 - 82 Sharer's possessive
 - 85 Late harvest mo.
 - 88 Novelist Brown
 - 91 Tilling tool
 - 94 Without gender, in Latin
 - 95 Egyptian god of death and rebirth
 - 97 Barbershop sounds
 - 98 Kind of bond
 - 99 Seasonal inflatable
 - 101 Chaos
 - 103 Tastes
 - 104 Board of a cosmetics company?
 - 106 Bard's instrument
 - 107 Cougar
 - 108 Hideki ____, W.W. II prime minister
 - 109 P.I.s, e.g.
 - 112 Gender abbr.
 - 114 Cat's pa
 - 116 Turn bad
- Online subscriptions: Today's puzzle and more than 4,000 past puzzles, nytimes.com/crosswords (\$39.95 a year).



- 46 Union members
- 49 Those, in Spanish
- 50 Cereal-box abbr.
- 52 Designer Miller
- 53 Relative of Ltd.
- 54 Hosp. areas
- 56 Unleashes upon
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- 112 Gender abbr.
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HARD - 50

Fill in the blank spaces in the grid so that every vertical column, every horizontal row and every 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9, without repeating any. There is really only one solution to each puzzle.

					9
	1	9	8	3	5
7			4		1
				5	8
5	8				1
		2	6		6
3				6	
	4		5	8	7
	2				3

Answers to last week's puzzles

2	6	5	1	4	8	3	7	9
1	3	8	9	5	7	6	2	4
7	4	9	3	2	6	8	5	1
9	8	7	5	1	2	4	3	6
3	2	1	8	6	4	5	9	7
4	5	6	7	9	3	1	8	2
5	1	3	4	7	9	2	6	8
6	9	4	2	8	5	7	1	3
8	7	2	6	3	1	9	4	5

B	I	F	L	A	G	N	A	G	J	O	B	J	O	S	I	E			
A	R	E	O	L	A	E	B	A	R	C	O	D	E	A	P	I	N	G	
G	U	I	L	T	Y	A	S	C	H	A	R	G	E	D	C	I	R	C	A
E	L	S	A	D	R	E	M	E	G	S	O	K	A	Y	E	D			
L	E	T	C	A	N	T	C	O	M	P	L	A	I	N	T	E	N		
J	A	R	S	O	V	A	T	E	D	I	G	E	S	T					
E	M	A	I	L	T	O	E	K	A	T	O	S	I	P					
T	E	L	L	M	E	I	M	P	R	E	T	T	O	L	I	V	E		
N	A	I	L	N	C	I	S	M	I	R	O	A	D	O	R	E	D		
A	L	A	B	A	M	A	B	E	F	I	T	R	C	A					
S	I	X	I	N	C	H	O	R	F	O	O	T	L	O	N	G			
D	O	T	L	E	W	I	S	R	I	P	S	O	F	F					
G	A	M	E	L	I	T	V	E	E	S	H	A	R	E					
L	L	A	N	O	P	L	E	A	S	E	B	E	S	E	A	T	E	D	
I	L	K	T	K	O	S	O	R	B	A	R	S	E	S					
B	E	E	T	L	E	S	T	T	O	P	S	M	A	R	K				
G	A	R	Y	O	U	R	E	T	H	E	B	O	S	S	W	A	R		
M	O	W	E	R	S	C	A	S	T	E	T	S	Z	E	T	A			
B	R	I	B	E	G	O	D	S	A	V	E	T	H	E	Q	U	E	E	N
A	I	S	L	E	O	N	E	A	W	A	Y	S	T	U	N	K	A	T	
S	C	H	E	D	A	N	D	A	X	E	S	E	I	S	M	S			

Calendar

Please send calendar items to editor@baysidegazette.com by 5 p.m. Monday. All community-related activities will be published at no charge.

Thurs., Feb. 22

FINANCIAL LITERACY: CYBER LIABILITY WITH BRADLEY ATLANTIC

Berlin Maryland Welcome Center, 14 S. Main St., 8 a.m. Breakfast and coffee provided. Free. <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/fls-2024-2945089?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=creatorshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=odclsxcollection&utm-source=cp&utm-aff=esbc>

STORY TIME: 'ALL BECAUSE YOU MATTER'

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10:30 a.m. Celebrate Black History Month with this wonderful book by Tami Charles. For ages 2-5 years. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

PLAY TIME

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Join in for a variety of activities and toys. Play and socialize with other families. For ages 2-5 years. 410-632-3495

SAM.GOV SIMPLIFIED - WEBINAR

Completing your SAM profile, strategies to earn federal contracts and grants and qualifications for federal work, 12-1 p.m. Register: <https://marylandcapital.org/education>.

NEIL YOUNG: BLUE-COLLAR ICON

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. From Neil Young's years with Buffalo Springfield to "Rockin' in the Free World." Frank DeLuco and Harry Burkett discuss his enduring 60-year career. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

HANDWRITING CLASS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 4 p.m. Handwriting Class 3 - Cursive. Third of three classes that build upon one another. For ages 8 years and older. 410-641-0650. www.worcesterlibrary.org

PILATES FOR BEGINNERS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 4:30 p.m. Joyce Landsman teaches this class that can improve flexibility, strength and muscle tone. Can be done on a mat or in a chair. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

PROFILE COLLAGES

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 5 p.m. Create a collage of your profile during this relaxing art session. Limit 15. Registration necessary: 410-957-0878. www.worcesterlibrary.org

POTIONS & REMEDIES: THE HISTORY OF APOTHECARIES

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 5 p.m. From Deadly Nightshade to Arsenic (and everything in between); come learn about

the apothecaries of yore while making your own soothing balm. Allergy notice: coconut oil. 410-632-3495

ROMANCE BOOK CLUB: 'THE ROMANTIC AGENDA' BY CLAIRE KANN

The Buzzed Word, 11805 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, 6 p.m. Join the Ocean City Library with The Buzzed Word for an afternoon of Queer Romance and Wine. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

BEACH SINGLE 55 PLUS MEET AND GREET

Thursdays - Harpoon Hanna's, 39064 Harpoon Road, Fenwick Island, DE, 4-6 p.m. 302-436-9577, BeachSingles.org

Fri., Feb. 23

HOMESCHOOL CREATIVE WRITING FOR TEENS

Worcester County Library - Snow Hill Branch, 307 N. Washington St., 10:30 a.m. Creative writing program that helps with vocabulary, imaginative thinking, literary knowledge and social enrichment. This program is geared for upper elementary to middle school, but all are welcome.

MAHJONG CLUB

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Join in for a fun morning of playing tile Mahjong. Feel free to bring your own tile set. All are welcome. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

FRIDAY MATINEE

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 2 p.m. American biographical war film that depicts the friendship between Tom Hudner and Jesse Brown, the first African American carrier pilot in the U.S. Navy. Light refreshments served. 410-957-0878

CREATIVE AGING WITH CARE: BOOK MAKING

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 2 p.m. Learn the fold and stitch version of making a book in this three-session class. Fill them with family stories, photos and artistic embellishments. Registration required: 410-208-4014.

Sat., Feb. 24

LOVE ON TAP CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL

Seacrets, 117 49th St., Ocean City, 1-5 p.m. Featuring live music, unlimited beer tastings and a commemorative cup. General admission, VIP and Designated Driver tickets available. Tickets: <https://www.shorecraftbeerfest.com/love-on-tap.html>.

CREATIVE KIDS CRAFT TIME

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Stop by anytime during the day to get

crafty with the group as they create colorful rainbow art together. All ages. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CRAFTY SATURDAY: CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH!

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 10 a.m. Celebrate Black History Month with some fun crafts. All ages are welcome. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

FRIED/BAKED CHICKEN N DUMPLINGS PLATTERS TO GO

Calvary United Methodist Church, 8607 Ironshire Station Road, Berlin. 10:30 a.m. Platters cost \$15 and come with two sides and a roll. Sides: homemade potato salad, Mac n cheese, greens and string beans. Also: rice pudding, corn bread, drinks, bread pudding, pies, cakes and more.

BOOK SIGNING WITH AL 'HONDO' HANDY

Ocean City Life-Saving Museum, 813 S. Atlantic Ave., 11 a.m.-noon. Meet local author Al "Hondo" Handy and learn about what it means to persevere. Books available for purchase. Free admission for book signing. Drawing for a free book before book signing. 410-289-4991

VETERANS UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 11 a.m. Preparing veterans for success in college by bringing them up to speed on critical math and English skills. Assistance with VA education, disability benefits, college admissions and more. 410-957-0878

FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET

Saturdays - White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway, 9 a.m. to noon. Shop for everything from fresh local produce to unique handmade artisan goods. Open to the public.

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BREAKFAST BUFFET

Whaleyville United Methodist Church, 11716 Sheppards Crossing Road, 7-10 a.m. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Buffet will include pancakes, bacon, sausage, scrapple, scrambled eggs, chipped beef, hash brown potatoes, toast, fruit and assorted beverages.

Sun., Feb. 25

OCEAN DOWNS CASINO SUPPORTS THE GRACE CENTER

Ocean Downs Casino, 10218 Racetrack Road, Berlin, 2-6 p.m. Participate in the Reel Difference Charity Slot Tournament. Cost is \$20 per try. For each \$20 get \$20 in free play and one play on the slots tournament machine. Spin to win. Benefits Grace Center.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

Sundays - Berlin Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 10 a.m. www.jw.org

Mon., Feb. 26

3-DAY WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP WITH MICK MCANDREWS

Art League of Ocean City - Center for the Arts, 502 94th St., 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. 3-Day Sophisticated Simplicity in Watercolor. Held Feb. 26-28. Cost is \$325 for members and \$406 for non-members. Register: <https://canvas.artleagueofoceancity.org/classes/1191> or 410-524-9433.

STORY TIME: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Crafts, songs and stories celebrating Black History Month. For ages 2-5 years. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org

CREATIVE AGING WITH CARE: BOOK MAKING

Berlin 50plus Center, 10129 Old Ocean City Blvd., 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Learn the fold and stitch version of making a book in this three-session class held Feb. 26-28. Once completed, them with family stories and artistic embellishments. Limit 16. 443-783-6164

WRITING FOR WELLNESS

Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 1:30 p.m. Writing about stressful experiences like illness may boost health and psychological well-being. Group uses exercises to stimulate creative expression. 410-208-4014, www.worcesterlibrary.org

TOWN CATS FUNDRAISER

Burley Oak Brewing Company, 10016 Old Ocean City Blvd., Berlin, 6-9 p.m. DJ, guest bartenders, mystery boxes and basket auction.

TO PRESERVE SLAVERY: HUMAN BONDAGE AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

This talk by University of Maryland historian Richard Bell examines the "1619 Project," 6:30 p.m. Is it supportable? What's the evidence? Registration required: 443-783-6164.

VIRTUAL POETRY READING

Wor-Wic Community College is inviting the public to a free virtual poetry reading by Ina Cariño via Zoom, 7 p.m. Visit the events section of www.worwic.edu for more information.

DELMARVA WOMEN'S A CAPELLA CHORUS

Mondays - Ocean Pines Community Center, 239 Ocean Parkway, 6:00-8:00 p.m. All ladies who love to sing invited. Mary, 410-629-9383 or Carol, 302-242-7062.

OVEREATER'S ANONYMOUS

Mondays - Worcester County Library - Ocean Pines Branch, 11107 Cathell Road, 7-8 p.m. No dues or fees. 410-459-9100

Calendar

Continued from Page 19

Tues., Feb. 27

PLAY DAY

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 10:30 a.m. Socialize with friends and play with a variety of toys. For ages 2-5 years. 410-957-0878, www.worcesterlibrary.org.

FREE PLAY DAY AND CRAFTS

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 10:30 a.m. Make new friends with play and improve language and motor skill development. For ages 2-5 years. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org.

OC KNITTING GROUP

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Do you love to knit or crochet? Bring whatever project you happen to be working on. 410-524-1818, www.worcesterlibrary.org.

BUILD AND EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS

Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, 1324 Belmont Ave., Suite. 401, Salisbury, 12-1 p.m. Discover the world of Merchant Services and understand their pivotal role in modern business operations. Bring your lunch. Also virtual. Register:

<https://marylandcapital.org/education>.

BEACH HEROES-OC

Tuesdays - Volunteer beach clean-up group meets from 9-10 a.m., year-round. Trash bags, grippers and gloves provided. Check the Facebook page "Beach Heroes-OC" for weekly meeting locations. All are welcome.

FREEDOM QUILT CRAFT

Worcester County Library - Pocomoke Branch, 301 Market St., 4 p.m. Celebrate Black History Month by learning about the codes hidden in Freedom Quilts and craft your own using construction paper. For ages 6-12 years. 410-957-0878

WOR-WIC HOSTS DUAL ENROLLMENT INFO SESSION

Wor-Wic Community College - Guerrieri Hall, 32000 Campus Drive, Salisbury, 6 p.m. Learn about how high school students can earn college credits while they are juniors and seniors in high school. Visit the events section of www.worwic.edu to register.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MEETING

Tuesdays - Berlin Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, 212 West St., Berlin, 7 p.m. www.jw.org

CHRISTIAN CONVERSATIONS

Ocean Pines Community Center, 235 Ocean Parkway, 6 p.m. Held Tuesday Feb.

20-March 26. A free moderated group discussion based on the works of C.S. Lewis. Everyone is welcome. Explore a great opportunity for Lenten reflection. 410-641-7052

ZUMBA TONING TUESDAYS

Tuesdays - Northside Park, 200 125th St., Ocean City, 5:30 p.m. Zumba with optional light weights. zumbajoyceoc@gmail.com

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY

Tuesdays - Worcester County Health Department, 9730 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3:30-4:30 p.m. TOPS is a weekly support and education group promoting weight loss and a healthy lifestyle. 410-289-4725

ARGENTINE TANGO PRACTICE

Tuesdays - Experienced dancers and others interested in watching or learning more are welcome, 7-9:30 p.m. No partner required. Info: TangobytheBeach.com.

Wed., Feb. 28

STUFFED ANIMAL SLEEPOVER

Worcester County Library - Ocean City Branch, 10003 Coastal Highway, 10:30 a.m. Bring your stuffed animal and blanket and listen to fun stories, songs and rhymes. Pajamas are encouraged. Leave your stuffed animal overnight and pick up

Feb. 29, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. For ages 2-5 years. 410-524-1818

HEART HEALTHY DIET SEMINAR WITH REGISTERED DIETITIAN KATIE DORSCH

Ocean City 50plus Center, 104 41st St., 1-2 p.m. Atlantic General registered dietitian Katie Dorsch will host a presentation and cooking demonstration on Heart Healthy Diets. Alyce Marzola, 410-641-9268

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY ON THE EASTERN SHORE

Worcester County Library - Berlin Branch, 13 Harrison Ave., 2 p.m. The Taylor House Museum will talk about African American heritage and culture on the Eastern Shore. 410-641-0650, www.worcesterlibrary.org

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Atlantic General Hospital, Conference Room 1, 9733 Healthway Drive, Berlin, 3-4:30 p.m. The goal of the support group is to provide participants with hope for the future. Gail Mansell, 410-641-9725, gmanzell@atlanticgeneral.org

KIWANIS CLUB MEETING

Wednesdays - Ocean Pines Community Center, Assateague Room, 239 Ocean Parkway, 8 a.m. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. Third Wednesday meetings are offsite and will be updated monthly on the website and Facebook. Guests are welcome. www.kiwanisofpoc.org



Grand Opening

Come celebrate the grand opening of our new location at
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Friday, March 1st at 10 AM



- *Gift certificates to the first 25 customers on Friday and Saturday!
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- *Coffee and bagels while they last!

NEW HOURS **Tuesday-Friday 10AM to 4PM**
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The Berlin location is closed.
 Our new ReStore will begin accepting scheduled drop offs in Ocean Pines on Tuesday, February 27.
 The online ReStore will open Wednesday, February 28.



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Continued on Page 23



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